## BABY FACT SHEET

# Feeding Cues

Baby's way of saying, "I'm hungry," "I need a break," "I'm full" or "I want to play"



#### **Cues That Your Baby Is** Hungry

- Mouthing
- Rooting
- Putting hand to his or her mouth
- Sucking movements
- Clenching fingers or making a tight fist over the chest or tummy
- Crying



### What to Do

- Try to feed your baby at this time.
- Unwrapping your baby, changing your position or your baby's position, or adjusting the bottle or nipple may stimulate your baby to feed.

#### **Cues That Your Baby May Need a Break or Rest During** the Feeding

- Looking away
- Arching of back
- Pulling away
- Spitting up
- Choking
- Crying



#### What to Do

Let your baby rest at this time. Your baby will start feeding again when he or she is ready.

It is normal for your baby to suck and pause during feedings. Most babies suck 10 to 15 times then pause for 3 to 5 seconds before starting to suck again. This is a good time to talk to your baby and allow him or her to explore your face.

#### **Cues That Show Your Baby** May Be Full

- Opening or relaxing arms alongside his or her body
- Opening hands or relaxing fingers
- Arching of back
- Pushing away
- Falling asleep



#### What to Do

- Stop the feeding.
- If baby just needs a break and wants to continue feedings, he or she will give you feeding cues.

#### **Cues That Your Baby Just** Wants to Spend Time With You

- Turning head towards you
- Looking at your face and eyes
- **Smiling**
- Reaching out to touch you

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# What to Do

- Take time during the feeding to play and talk with your baby.
- Feeding time is more than just taking time to eat. It is a good time to get to know your baby and take pleasure in each other.



#### When to Call Your **Health Care Provider**

- If your baby has difficulty sucking or feeding.
- If your baby doesn't suck or feed at all.
- If baby is vomiting.
- If baby has fewer feedings than usual.
- If baby has signs of dehydration:
  - Four or fewer wet diapers in 24 hours
  - Dry mouth
  - Sunken eyes
  - Sunken soft spot on head (fontanel)
  - Extreme irritability
  - o Listlessness (decreased activity)
  - Possibly no tears